

The Four Mile Project Corridor



Project Status

The Supplemental Draft EIS provides more detailed information on the two alternatives. We continue to learn more and progress the designs for both alternatives as our team of engineers, urban design specialists, environmental experts, construction managers, and independent cost estimators weigh in. The team has conducted an exhaustive process of design development and evaluation, but there is continued debate about the best approach. It is not surprising for a project that will have such a significant impact on the city's landscape. For some of the concepts we hear most often about, from the public, look for more information about their feasibility in separate fact sheets, or on our Web site, www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct.

Funding

The project currently has \$2.4 billion in committed funds and in anticipated funds. WSDOT and the City of Seattle have also recently identified a 'core' project that could be built first with committed and anticipated funds. The areas of the project facing the greatest risk in another earthquake would be built first. This includes the south end and central waterfront sections, and initial improvements to Battery Street Tunnel.

When will construction begin?

For either the cut-and-cover tunnel or a new elevated structure, utility work is scheduled to begin in 2008 and roadway construction in 2010.



Contact us:

Visit: www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct

Email: viaduct@wsdot.wa.gov

Call: the project information line at 206-269-4421

Write: Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project
c/o Washington State Department of Transportation
999 Third Ave, Suite 2424 Seattle, WA 98104

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The Alaskan Way Viaduct & Seawall Replacement Project

08.06

How Did We Get to Two Alternatives?

Replacing the Alaskan Way Viaduct is a top priority for the State and the City of Seattle. The Nisqually earthquake damaged the viaduct in 2001, but the structure was actually a candidate for repair or replacement before then.

Cracks in the concrete and weakened column joints served as early evidence that the structure was deteriorating due to old age. In 2000, WSDOT initiated a study to determine whether the viaduct could be fixed, or if it would be necessary to replace the entire structure. Soon after, the 6.8 magnitude Nisqually earthquake shook the Puget Sound region on February 28, 2001. The viaduct incurred serious damage, and the study immediately turned into a full-scale effort to narrow down the list of replacement options, complete the environmental review, and get ready for construction.

Over seventy concepts were suggested.

The initial study identified a wide range of replacement options. As design progressed, this list of 76 concepts was gradually whittled down as we learned more about which were feasible. Others were mixed and matched to create effective solutions.

Several concepts were eliminated relatively early in the process, including a retrofit of the existing viaduct, a bored tunnel under downtown, a bridge in Elliott Bay, and improvements to I-5. The reasons they were ruled out varied. Some concepts could not withstand a major earthquake, others offered near impossible transitions to the Battery Street Tunnel, and still others did not meet the mobility needs for western neighborhoods such as Ballard and West Seattle.



How does the seawall fit into the equation?

The City of Seattle owns the seawall separating the viaduct and Elliott Bay. Following the earthquake, the City inspected the seawall and found significant damage. It was discovered then that tiny marine creatures called gribbles and teredos were eating away the seawall. Because the seawall holds in the soil underneath the viaduct, WSDOT and the City joined together to replace both the viaduct and seawall as one project.

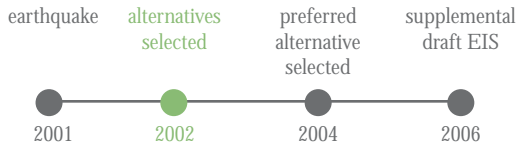


Taking the results of the initial study, WSDOT and the City began to work on the details for the recommended concepts - where they would begin and end, where access to and from SR 99 would be provided, and how much they might cost. By June 2002, the list had been narrowed down to five plans called Rebuild, A, B, C, and D. These five potential plans to replace the viaduct were released for public comment.

Taking into account preliminary comments from the public, elected officials, and regulatory agencies, the project partners moved forward with the environmental review and decision-making process. Both early tunnel concepts (C and D), and the tunnel and aerial combination (B) were eliminated for their high costs, and engineers went back to the drawing board.

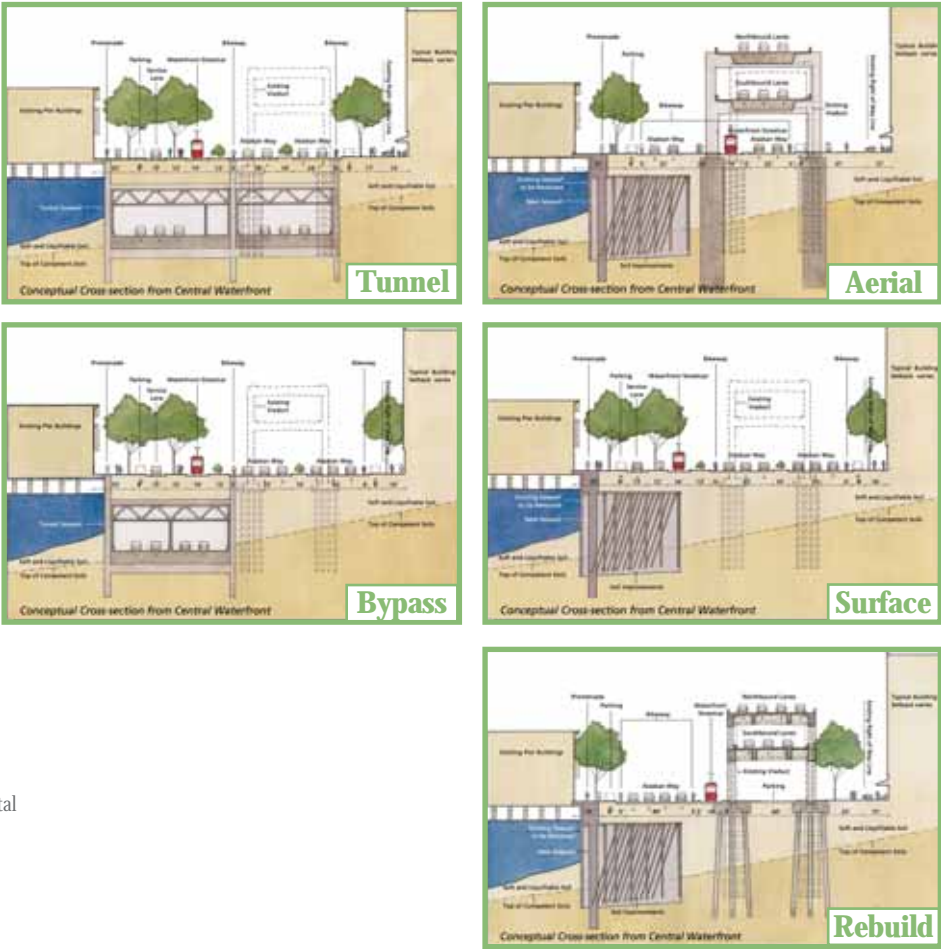
From Concepts to Alternatives

By March 2004, five modified alternatives had been developed and were formally evaluated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). These alternatives were a rebuilt viaduct, a new aerial structure, a single-level cut-and-cover tunnel, a bypass cut-and-cover tunnel, and a 6-lane surface boulevard.



June 2002 Replacement Concepts	Estimated Cost Ranges*
Rebuild the existing viaduct	\$3.2 to 3.5 billion
A) New aerial structure in the same location as the viaduct	\$5.7 to 6.4 billion
B) Single-level tunnel and single-level aerial structure combination along Alaskan Way and two bored/mined tunnels underneath Belltown to Aurora Avenue north of the existing Battery Street Tunnel	\$7.8 to 8.9 billion
C) Stacked cut-and-cover tunnel with ramps to downtown. Tunnel extended along the waterfront to Broad Street and turned up Broad Street until it reached Aurora Avenue north of the existing Battery Street Tunnel	\$8.8 to 10.3 billion
D) Stacked cut-and-cover tunnel with ramps to downtown and a bored/mined tunnel under Belltown to Aurora Avenue north of the existing Battery Street Tunnel	\$10.1 to 11.6 billion

*Cost estimates were completed in 2002



A Preferred Alternative is Selected

After public comment on the Draft EIS, WSDOT, the City, and FHWA selected the cut-and-cover tunnel as the preferred alternative in December 2004 as part of the environmental review process. The cut-and-cover tunnel was selected because it maintained the mobility provided by SR 99 and reconnected downtown with the waterfront. In January 2005, the Seattle City Council also adopted the tunnel as its preferred alternative. The Rebuild Alternative was carried forward as an alternate option if it was determined there was not enough funding for the tunnel.

In order to secure a timeline for funding, the Washington State Legislature passed legislation in 2006 requiring an expert review panel to study the feasibility of both alternatives. This legislation also directed the Seattle City Council to either hold an advisory vote or to hold public hearings and pass a resolution stating the City's preferred replacement option.

2006: The Two Alternatives

Also in 2006, the Rebuild Alternative was renamed the Elevated Structure Alternative to better represent changes made to the design since the Draft EIS was published. The latest design is actually a hybrid of the Rebuild and Aerial alternatives. It has wider shoulders and lanes than were in the Rebuild Alternative, but not as wide ramps as were proposed for the Aerial Alternative.

Cut-and-Cover Tunnel

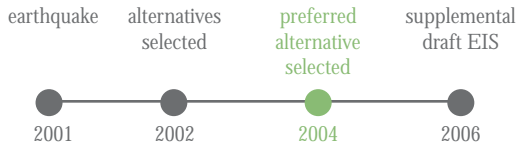
Core project, \$3.0 to \$3.6 billion
Full project, \$3.7 to \$4.5 billion

Costs are based on a construction plan that takes seven to ten years.

Elevated Structure

Core project, \$2.0 to \$2.4 billion
Full project, \$2.7 to \$3.1 billion

The current cost and schedule estimates for these alternatives were updated in December 2005. Costs are based on a construction plan that takes ten to twelve years.



Mayor Greg Nickels before leading a tour of the Alaskan Way Viaduct during the semi-annual inspection.

